



Celebrating 25 Years of Success

PRESS RELEASE

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NATIONAL CHAMPION BOSTON COLLEGE TOPS 08-09 PRESEASON POLL

BOSTON. - Hockey East Commissioner Joe Bertagna announced the preseason men's coaches poll on Monday afternoon at the conference's annual media day held in Legends Restaurant at the TD Banknorth Garden in Boston.

Boston College, which recorded 86 points and six first-place votes, looks to defend both its Hockey East and National Championships in an attempt to make it to the NCAA title game for the sixth time this decade. The Eagles return Joe Whitney and Ben Smith, the second and third leading Hockey East scorers, respectively. In addition, 2008-09 captains Brock Bradford, Tim Filangieri, and Benn Ferriero will lead the team in its attempt for back-to-back National Championships. In net, sophomore John Muse, is coming off one of the best freshman showings of all time with a record of 25-11-8 during his rookie season.

Boston University, which earned 80 points and three first-place tallies, retains the league's tenth best scorer in sophomore standout Colin Wilson. Wilson was drafted seventh overall by Nashville in this year's NHL draft and is already on the Hobey Baker watch. Alongside Wilson, senior Chris Higgins (14g, 18a) and sophomore Nick Bonino (16g, 13a) will help drive this high-powered offense. Senior co-captain Matt Gilroy, as well as juniors Brian Strait and Eric Gryba and sophomores Kevin Shattenkirk and Colby Cohen sure up the Terrier blueline. The Terriers welcome two new goalies to the squad in Grant Rollehiser and Kieran Millan.

The UNH Wildcats were picked third in the poll with one first-place vote, after the team went 19-5-3 en route to the league's regular season title in 07-08. The Wildcats will have to fill the shoes of four departed All-Americans, which included Player of the Year Kevin Regan. The hole between the pipes will be filled by junior goalie Brian Foster. The Wildcats offensive lineup for the 2008-09 season will be led by sophomore James vanRiemsdyk, UNH's leading returning scorer, and classmate Danny Dries, who will also look to live up to his stellar freshman season when he tallied 28 points.

Brad Theissen will return between the pipes to try and lead a young Northeastern team to crack the top half of the conference. The offense will be headed up by senior captain and 2007-08 team MVP, Joe Vitale. Vitale was the number ten scorer in Hockey East and led the Huskies with 35 points (12g, 13a). Coach Greg Cronin will look to capitalize on the experience of his team, returning 27 players from the 2007-08 roster.

Last year marked the first season Vermont made it to the semifinals since their entry into Hockey East in 2005-06. The Catamounts made it to the title game, where they lost to the Eagles. Offense should not be a problem for the Catamounts, though, as they hold onto their top three scorers, namely senior captain Dean Strong, along with Colin Vock and Viktor Stålberg. Vermont also returns second leading scorer, sophomore Colin Vock (9g, 18a) and third on the list, junior Viktor Stalberg, who tallied 10 goals and 13 assists on the year.

UMass will open its season at Ice Breaker against Michigan State and North Dakota at Agganis Arena. Captains Cory Quirk, and Brett Watson will play key roles in leading UMass' offense. Sophomore Paul Dainton will need to show the confidence that he had in the first half of his freshman campaign in his second season with a 2.56 GAA and a .911 save percentage.

Blaise MacDonald's UMass-Lowell River Hawks return 23 players from their 2007-08 roster, including team offensive leader and team MVP, junior winger Kory Falite. Falite enjoyed a standout sophomore season, leading the team in goals (18) and overall points (32). Last season, Carter Hutton and Nevin Hamilton split the time between the pipes, earning 2.48 and 2.56 GAA, respectively.

Providence junior Chris Mannix will try to step in as the quality netminder that Providence needs, with the departure of Tyler Sims. Coming back for his senior season, the Friars' second leading scorer, defenseman Matt Taormina, will look to follow up on a solid junior year. Taormina recorded 27 points on nine goals and 18 assists. Up front, Pierce Norton and Kyle Laughlin will try to improve on last year's fifth place finish.

The University of Maine welcomes ten freshmen to its squad this year, hoping to bring the team back to the Hockey East playoffs. While the Black Bears missed the conference playoffs for the first time since 1998, they ended the season winning five of their last six contests. Maine will look to junior Dave Wilson and freshman Scott Darling in net.

Merrimack was glad to have Rob Ricci back last year, as the Ontario native looks to follow up his standout season, which saw him lead the Warriors in assists (21) and points (34). Sophomore Chris Barton was second in points among Merrimack forwards, notching 19 (6g, 13a) on the year. Junior Andrew Braithwaite looks to continue his successful stretch that spanned the final 18 games of the season.

The regular season schedule will determine the eight teams that qualify for the Hockey East Championship Tournament, which begins with the quarterfinal round on campus sites of the highest four seeds from on the weekend of March 13-15. The four quarterfinal winners will advance to the TD Banknorth Garden in Boston for the semifinals and Championship Game on Friday, March 20 and Saturday, March 21.

The Hockey East Association is a 10-team, Division-I college hockey conference, with offices based in Wakefield, Mass. Founded in 1983, the league has won five NCAA championships in the past 16 years. The conference also sponsors an eight-team women's league which began play in 2002-03.

2008-09 HOCKEY EAST MEN'S PRESEASON COACHES POLL

Rk.	Team (FPV)	Pts
1.	Boston College (6)	86
2.	Boston University (3)	80
3.	New Hampshire (1)	78
4.	Northeastern	62
5.	Vermont	58
6.	Massachusetts	48
7.	UMass-Lowell	46
8.	Providence	34
9.	Maine	28
10.	Merrimack	20

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